

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SAB-01 SY-05 OC-05

CCO-00 A-01 OPR-02 /091 W

----- 048210

O 041230Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9879

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NY

CIA WASH DC

DIA WASH DC IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

CONCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMSIXTFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3961

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STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN LEBANON 4 MAY 1976: NO CEASEFIRE SO FAR

REF: BEIRUT 3935 (O 031347Z MAY 76)

1. PORT AREA OF BEIRUT CONTINUES TO BE MAJOR COCKPIT IN CURRENT CLASHES AS MUSLIM/LEFTIST FORCES (PFLP-GC, PFLP, MURABITOUN, LEBANESE ARAB ARMY) NOW APPEAR TO HAVE CONSOLIDATED THEIR HOLD ON ALLENBY STREET AXIS. FIGHTING IN THIS AREA APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY FIERCE; AUB HOSPITAL REPORTS THAT IT OPERATING ABOVE CAPACITY RECEIVING CASUALTIES, BULK OF WHOM ARE APPARENTLY LEFTIST COMBATANTS. ELSEWHERE IN CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE, ARTILLERY EXCHANGES CONTINUED OVERNIGHT BUT NO RPT NO SIGNIFICANT GROUND MOVEMENT HAS BEEN NOTED. RAS REIRUT AREA WAS SPARED WORST OF SHELLING NIGHT MAY 3/4, BUT RAS AN NABA AND OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS IN CITY CENTER TOOK NUMEROUS INCOMING ROUNDS DESPITE DECISIONS OF HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE THAT 2200 HOURS LOCAL 3 MAY SHOULD BE FINAL DEADLINE FOR ENDING BOMBARDMENTS. BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO RECEIVE MUNITIONS FROM ABROAD.

2. BEIRUT AIRPORT WAS SERIOUSLY MENACED BY MORTAR SHELLING 3 MAY BUT CONTINUES TO OPERATE AS OF 1200 HOURS LOCAL 4 MAY. INCOMING ROUND 3 MAY IMPACTED IN FREIGHT AREA KILLING ONE. IN LATE AFTERNOON SAME DAY, ANOTHER SHELL STRUCK AIRCRAFT PARKING APRON OUTSIDE ARRIVAL LOUNGE ALLEGEDLY WOUNDING MEA STEWARDESS.

3. POLITICOS CONTINUE THEIR TO-ING AND FRO-ING WITH NO RESOLUTION OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY ISSUE IN SIGHT. DEPUTY AMIN AL HAFEZ IS LATEST TRAVELLER TO DAMASCUS WHERE HE WILL REPORTEDLY SEEK SYRIAN AGREEMENT TO DROP CANDIDACY OF SARKIS IN FAVOR OF ELUSIVE "THIRD MAN". HAFEZ WILL REPORTEDLY BE SPEAKING TO SYRIANS ON BEHALF OF SPEAKER KAMAL ASSAD'S INDEPENDENT GROUPING OF DEPUTIES. JUMBLATT, AFTER MEETINGS 3 MAY WITH ASSORTED PALESTINIANS

(HAWATMEH OF PDFLP AND ABU SALEH (MOHAMMED SALEH) OF FATAH'S LEFT WING) AND CONVOCAION OF HIS "PROGRESSIVE" ALLIES, MADE DAILY PRESS STATEMENT WITH PREDICTABLE BUT FAIRLY RESTRAINED COMMENTS AGAINST "SYRIAN PRESSURE" IN LEBANESE PRESIDENTIAL RACE. FRENCH-LANGUAGE CONFIDENTIAL

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"L'ORIENT-LE JOUR"(WHICH IS PUBLISHED BY PIERRE (BROTHER OF RAYMOND) EDDE), PLAYED UP ALLEGED JUMBLATT COMMENTS ABOUT "ARAB-ZIONIST-US" CONSPIRACY TO INSTALL SARKIS AS NEXT PRESIDENT. WITH MAJOR CANDIDATES APPARENTLY STILL BALANCING ONE ANOTHER AND MANY A MARONITE SEEING HIMSELF AS COUNTRY'S NEXT CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SAID AKL OF THE RIGHT-WING CEDAR FRONT THREW HIS HAT 3 MAY INTO THE LITTERED POLITICAL RING.

4. RUMORS ARE RIFE ABOUT TOWN THAT YASSIR 'ARAFAT AND ABU
IYAD (SALAH KHALAF) HAVE SLIPPED AWAY TO VISIT DAMASCUS, BUT
PALESTINIAN SOURCES ARE REFUSING TO CONFIRM OR DENY REPORT. IF THEY
ARE IN FACT GOING, WE UNDERSTAND THEY HAVEN'T LEFT YET.

5. RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY (LAA) HAS
CONCLUDED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT WHEREBY LIBYA
WILL PURCHASE THE ENTIRE TOBACCO CROP FROM SOUTH LEBANON FOR THE
CURRENT YEAR BEARS POSSIBLE LONGER TERM IMPLICATIONS. SALE OF
THIS CASH CROP IS VITALLY IMPORTANT IN ECONOMICALLY-DEPRESSED
SOUTHERN AREA AND LIBYAN PURCHASE WILL ENHANCE POPULARITY OF BOTH
LAA AND LIBYA IN THIS SENSITIVE REGION.
BROWN

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